United Nations A/ES-10/681–S/2015/433

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
15 June 2015

Original: English

General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventieth year

Identical letters dated 12 June 2015 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

In follow-up to my letter, dated 9 June 2015, regarding the forty-eighth year of Israel's military occupation, I draw attention to the recent illegal policies and practices that continue to destabilize the situation and inflict grave hardship on the Palestinian people.

In this regard, it should be noted that the illegal practices being highlighted in the present letter reflect only a small sample of Israel's violations throughout the Occupied State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem. The fact is that no one has been spared the occupation's subjugation, oppression and aggression, as Palestine men, women, children, the disabled, the ill and elderly persons have all been victims of the grave and systematic violations of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, perpetrated every single day by Israel, the occupying Power.

Recently, civilian casualties have continued to be caused by the Israeli occupying forces against Palestinian civilians, including children and peaceful demonstrators. On 10 June, the occupying forces killed a young man in Jenin in a violent military raid on the area. Izz al-Din Bani Gharra, age 23, was shot in the back by Israeli soldiers as he came out of a mosque after prayers. This was preceded by a dawn raid on 8 June, in which undercover units invaded the Beit Jala Hospital in Bethlehem and attempted to abduct two wounded Palestinians, Mo'tasem Nabil Shweiki, age 21, and Mahmoud Emad Shweiki, age 18, who were receiving treatment after being shot by the occupying forces on 7 June in Beit Jala.

The occupying forces also continue to shoot at Palestinian fishermen and farmers in the Gaza Strip, routinely causing injury, destroying the livelihoods of more families, and both violating and threatening the ceasefire agreement concluded under Egyptian auspices on 26 August 2014. In the past month, there were over 27 shootings and two shelling attacks that resulted in the wounding of seven Palestinian fishermen, damage to fishing nets and equipment and the confiscation of

Please recycle

fishing boats. Today, occupying forces shot live fire at peaceful demonstrators in Kafr Qaddum in the West Bank, injuring five people, two of them critically. Palestinian civilians also continue to suffer attacks by extremist Israeli settlers, with children, students and farmers particularly vulnerable to such violence and terror, and in the past few days another two Palestinian men were injured in two hit-and-run incidents involving Israeli settlers.

Military raids also continue to be carried out with the deliberate objective of abducting, arresting and detaining Palestinian civilians. Hundreds of so-called "search and arrest operations" have been carried out by the Israeli occupying forces in recent weeks in cities, towns and villages throughout Occupied Palestine, with particular ferocity in Occupied East Jerusalem. During such raids, the occupying forces routinely ransack homes, terrorize families in the dead of night and forcibly detain, interrogate and assault Palestinians, including children. This includes beatings and threats of harm to individuals and their families, including threats of sexual violence. Recently, dozens more Palestinian civilians have been arrested, detained and imprisoned, including the detention of 11 Palestinians, 5 of whom were children, on 9 June in Beit Hanina.

The physical and psychological maltreatment, including torture, of Palestinian prisoners and detainees being held captive by Israel also continues unabated. In this regard, the plight of administrative detainees, currently 450 Palestinians, among other prisoners, remains critical; hunger strikes continue as a means of drawing attention to the violation of their rights. Khader Adnan — who endured a prolonged hunger strike of 66 days in 2012 and was detained on 8 July 2014 by the occupying forces, which marked the tenth time he has been administratively detained since 1997 — is nearing the fortieth day of a hunger strike, with his health and his life again in danger as he is suffering from extreme weight loss, loss of vision and weakness that has left him wheelchair-bound.

I must also underscore the grave plight of Palestinian children imprisoned by Israel, with children continuing to be violently seized from their homes by occupying forces in the dead of night as well as beaten, blindfolded, strip-searched, interrogated without legal counsel, held incommunicado from their parents, put in solitary confinement and otherwise psychologically traumatized and scarred, with many such acts amounting to torture. In that connection, we draw attention to a campaign sponsored by several non-governmental organizations entitled "No Way to Treat a Child", which addresses the horrors that Palestinian children are subjected to while under Israeli military detention.

Reports indicate that 30 Palestinian children under the age of 15 were arrested by Israel in the month of May alone. According to Defense for Children International, each year approximately 500 to 700 children, some as young as 12 years of age, are arrested, detained and prosecuted in the Israeli military detention system. It is also estimated that at least 95,000 Palestinian children have been arrested by Israel since the occupation began in 1967. This appalling fact, along with the countless other Israeli crimes against Palestinian children, must be taken into serious consideration in the context of the upcoming Security Council deliberations on the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict, with a view to considering the means to ending such egregious violations against children, ensuring the protection of children in all circumstances and holding the perpetrators accountable.

In the Gaza Strip, tensions remain high and have risen recently, with several Israeli military operations near and beyond the border areas, including in Khuza'a and Khan Younis. The humanitarian situation of Palestinian families there remains grave as the Israeli blockade continues and the deplorable impact of the Israeli military aggression of the past summer continues to mar every aspect of their lives. Recovery and rehabilitation continue to be obstructed, not only at the physical level of building reconstruction, but also at the human level as the Palestinian civilian population continues to be deprived of basic necessities, including medical, water, fuel and construction supplies, deprived of livelihoods, isolated from the entire world and deprived of any normalcy of life.

Here, I must highlight the recent findings by the World Bank that unemployment in Gaza is the highest in the world, at 43 per cent, with youth unemployment having reached a staggering rate of 60 per cent as at the end of 2014. These shocking figures were presented in the report of the World Bank to the meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians in Brussels on 27 May 2015. In this regard, the World Bank Country Director for West Bank and Gaza, Steen Lau Jorgensen, stated that "The ongoing blockade and the 2014 war have taken a toll on Gaza's economy and people's livelihoods. Gaza's exports virtually disappeared and the manufacturing sector has shrunk by as much as 60 per cent. The economy cannot survive without being connected to the outside world." The lack of opportunity and hopelessness suffered by the Palestinian civilian population in Gaza, particularly our young people, must be cause for alarm and should impel renewed international commitment and action to bring an end to the inhumane Israeli blockade and to accelerate the reconstruction of Gaza and ensure sustainable solutions to the underlying problems and the provision of hope and possibility, where for too long there has been none.

Of course, the recent period has also witnessed the continuation of Israel's settlement colonization throughout Occupied Palestine, especially in and around Occupied East Jerusalem, gravely harming the contiguity and integrity of our land and destroying the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders. In grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention, notably articles 49 and 33, Israel persists with construction of settlements and the wall, confiscation of Palestinian land, demolition of homes and properties, and forced displacement of Palestinian civilians, with Bedouin communities most threatened in this regard.

In the southern hills of Al-Khalil, the homes and existence of the Palestinian residents of Sussiya village continue to be endangered by the occupying Power's colonization schemes. The civilian population there is facing imminent forced displacement as measures continue to be taken to facilitate the expansion of the nearby illegal settlement of "Susya". At least 4,000 Palestinians in that area, the majority of whom are herders or farmers, face such a fate if the occupying Power is not stopped. On 3 June, occupying forces also demolished over 30 residential structures and livestock barns in the northern Jordan Valley and ordered Palestinian residents of Um Salmouna, a village south of Bethlehem, to stop construction of their houses. On 11 June, Israeli bulldozers levelled four acres of land belonging to Palestinian farmer Sabri Rashad Manasra from Wadi Fukin. Israel also recently decided to seize 202 acres of privately-owned land belonging to 140 Palestinian families from the villages of Deir Dibwan and Rammoun north of Ramallah to making new "dumping grounds" for its illegal settlements.

These incidents are only a few of the countless violations and crimes being perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people on any given day. The nearly half-century of belligerent military occupation is driven and sustained only by such illegal policies and practices. The international community, including the Security Council, must confront this unlawful situation and cannot continue to turn a blind eye to this injustice. Collective international action is required now to bring Israel into compliance with its legal obligations under international law and United Nations resolutions without exception, to protect the Palestinian people, including our children, until this occupation is brought to an end and to salvage the prospects for the two-State solution for peace before it is too late.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 544 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 9 June 2015 (A/ES-10/680-S/2015/417) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed against the Palestinian people by Israel, the occupying Power, for which it must be held accountable and the perpetrators brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations